

DOT: Frozen road declaration expands Thursday to cover most of Wisconsin

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Effective 12:01 a.m. Thursday, January 28, 2021, all but one of Wisconsin's regions will be under the frozen road declaration, which allows heavier loads for trucks hauling logs or winter maintenance salt and sand.

The frozen road determination for the last remaining region, Zone 5 which covers the southeast corner of the state, will be made as conditions warrant (view map: <https://wisdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=2e56b5b256124198b0be2c4815c42a18>).

WisDOT and county highway personnel monitor temperature forecasts and frost tubes (liquid-filled devices under pavement) to help determine when roads are adequately frozen to accommodate heavier loads. This video shows how WisDOT monitors field conditions to verify frost depths: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGvOoYYKAS0>

The declaration is issued once the ground under the highway pavement is frozen to a depth of at least 18 inches, allowing the maximum gross weight for trucks hauling logs or salt and sand for maintaining roads in winter to go up to 98,000 pounds on vehicles with a minimum of five axles (from the normal 80,000 pounds). Special permits for hauling the increased weights are not required in the declared zones, but vehicles must be legally licensed at 80,000 pounds to handle the increased weights.

The higher weight limits do not apply to county or local roads unless authorized by the local agency having maintenance authority. Also, higher weights may not be

transported on any highways or bridges specifically posted for lower weight limits.

The [“Motor carrier/trucker” section of the WisDOT website](#) contains comprehensive information impacting commercial motor vehicle operators including [weight restriction programs](#) and [frozen road declaration](#). Customers can also check a recorded message on the Frozen Road Hotline at (608) 266-8417. Haulers with specific questions can contact WisDOT’s Oversize/Overweight Permits Unit at (608) 266-7320.